

REMARKS

Claims 1-5, 7-12, and 14-27 remain pending in the application. Upon entry of the present amendment, claims 14, 15, 21, 24 and 26 will be amended. Entry of the present amendment, reconsideration of the rejection and allowance of the pending application in view of the following remarks are respectfully requested.

In the Final Office Action, the Examiner allowed claims 1-5, 7-12 and 17-20.

The Examiner rejected claims 14 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Abe et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,828,918). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection for at least the following reasons.

In the Final Office Action, the Examiner objected to claims 14, 15 and 21-26 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but indicated that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants assume that the Examiner means to object to claims 15, 16 and 21-26 and merely committed a typo in the Office Action, since the Examiner indicated on the Office Action Summary (Form PTOL-326) that claims 15, 16 and 21-26 are objected to, claim 14 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b), and referred to the recited features of claim 15 in his reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter.

Upon entry of the present amendment, claims 15, 21, 24 and 26 will be amended to be placed in independent form. Thus, Applicants submit that claims 15, 21, 24 and 26 will be in condition for allowance upon entry of the present amendment.

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Upon entry of the present amendment, dependent claims 16, 22, 23 and 25 are also submitted to be in condition for allowance for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to independent claims 15, 21 and 24.

Claim 14 will be amended to be placed in dependent form, depending on claim 15, upon entry of the present amendment. Dependent claims 14 and 27 are submitted to be in condition for allowance for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to independent claim 15.

Applicants respectfully submit that the above-noted claim amendments do not raise any new issues requiring further consideration and/or search, as each claimed combination of features recited in the present amendment has been previously presented in either the response filed on November 12, 2004 or the response filed on August 5, 2005, has already been considered by the Examiner, and the Examiner indicated that such claims contain allowable subject matter.

Based on the above, it is respectfully submitted that, upon entry of the present amendment, this application will be in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Applicants recognize that the current status of the present application is after-Final. However, Applicants respectfully submit that entry of the present amendment is proper in the current circumstances, as the present amendment does not raise any new issues requiring further search and/or consideration, and places each of the claims in condition for allowance.

Entry and consideration of the present amendment, reconsideration of the outstanding Office Action, and allowance of the present application and all of the claims therein are respectfully requested and now believed to be appropriate. Applicants have made a sincere effort to place the present invention in condition for allowance and believe that they have now done so.

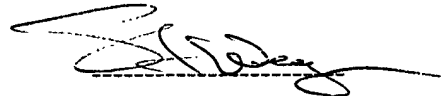
Any amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Should an extension of time be necessary to maintain the pendency of this application, including any extensions of time required to place the application in condition for allowance by an Examiner's Amendment, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fee to Deposit Account No. 19-0089.

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Should the Examiner have any questions or comments regarding this response, or the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
Makoto MOGAMIYA et al.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bruce H. Bernstein', written over a horizontal line.

Bruce H. Bernstein
Reg. No. 29,027

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GREENBLUM & BERNSTEIN, P.L.C.
1950 Roland Clarke Place
Reston, VA 20191
(703) 716-1191

Steven Wegman
Reg. No. 31,438